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Application No.: 10/661908

Case No.: 58575US002

Were restriction to be effected between the claims in Groups I, II and III, a separate examination of the claims in Groups I, II and III would require substantial duplication of work on the part of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Even though some additional consideration would be necessary, the scope of analysis of novelty of all the claims of Groups I, II and III would have to be as rigorous as when only the claims of Group I were being considered by themselves. Clearly, this duplication of effort would not be warranted where these claims of different categories are so interrelated. Further, Applicants submit that for restriction to be effected between the claims in Groups I, II and III, it would place an undue burden by requiring payment of a separate filing fee for examination of the nonelected claims, as well as the added costs associated with prosecuting two applications and maintaining two patents.

Species Election

The Office Action further asserts that the application contains claims directed to the following patentability distinct species: (1) tube; (2) sheet; (3) filament; (4) hollow fiber. The Office Action states that Applicants are required to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits. In response, applicants elect species (2) a sheet. All of the claims in Group I (i.e claims 1-16, 42 and 43) are readable on the elected species.

Conclusion

Applicants have elected Group I, claims 1-16 and 42-43. Continued prosecution of this application is respectfully requested.

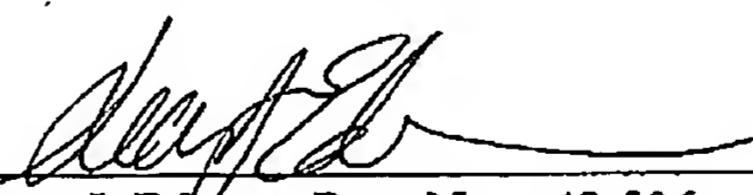
A Petition for Extension of Time is being submitted herewith. Please charge the fee to Deposit Account No. 13-3723. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number with questions that can be resolved with a simple teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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